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3-17-1975

### News Release - 1975-03-17

E. De la Garza

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

17 March 1975

WASHINGTON, D C -- Rep Kika de la Garza, in opening public hearings today by the House Agriculture Subcommittee he heads, expressed concern that the fuel needs of farm producers are not being given adequate attention in energy programs being prepared by the Administration.

"These hearings have been called in an effort to find out what the Department of Agriculture is undertaking to do, and with what success, to protect the interests of farmers in fuel supply and fuel cost," the South Texas Congressman said. "We hope to make it clear that it is most often impossible for farm producers to pass on their increased costs and to determine what plans the various Federal departments and agencies involved have made to meet this situation."

William J Scherle of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service told the House committee that farmers spent about \$1.9 billion for all kinds of fuel in 1973 and will spend more than \$3 billion this year. He said direct fuel costs now account for about four percent of total farm production expenses.

Another first-day witness, Gorman C Smith, Acting Assistant Administrator for the Federal Energy Administration's regulatory programs, conceded that there is "some justification" for the claim that small farmers would be disproportionately affected by the increased fuel costs. He said a rebate proposal, requiring legislation, is being worked out to overcome or minimize the adverse effects.

Other witnesses Monday included representatives of fertilizer, processing, baking and dairy industries. Rep de la Garza said the hearings will continue on Tuesday.

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